The youth festival "Africa in St. Petersburg" was held at SPbSU

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The third International Youth Festival, "Africa in St. Petersburg," was held at St. Petersburg University on the eve of Africa Day. This year's theme was "We are together on the map of the world." More than 250 individuals participated, including honorary consuls of African nations, members of the municipal government, African public groups, and students from St. Petersburg colleges, including 25 African students from SPbPU.



The festival was opened by Vice-Governor Konstantin Zvonik, who read out the welcoming speech of Alexander Beglov, Governor of St. Petersburg and member of the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg State University. *“A significant role in the liberation of African countries from colonial dependence belongs to the USSR. Then, as well as now, our Fatherland strives for a just world order and protection of human values. Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized - the African continent is becoming a new center of power, its importance is growing exponentially”*, - said Alexander Dmitrievich in his message.

Speaking on scientific and educational collaboration between Russia and Africa, Konstantin Zvonik stated that the number of African students in St. Petersburg is currently close to 3,000 and is growing yearly.



Andrey Malkov, Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Youth Policy, Public Associations, and Digitalization; Victor Budny, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Angola in St. Petersburg; and Anatoly Loshakov, Counselor of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Representative Office in St. Petersburg, spoke to the festival attendees. Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the Project Office of the Russian-African Network University, and Yury Snisarenko, Director of the St. Petersburg Science Foundation, also shared information about their work, experience, and international projects.



Maxim Zalyvsky invited SPBGU to join the RAFU consortium in his speech. "*As my colleagues already stated, our current gathering within the walls of the oldest university in Saint Petersburg is not an accident. SPBGU is a leading university both academically and in terms of the proportion of African students. This*
university has extensive experience in Africanistics and international partnership with African nations and would be an outstanding addition to our consortium, offering even more prospects to both parties."



This year's events will help international students acclimate to life in St. Petersburg and familiarize themselves with Russian culture, according to Oksana Vladimirovna Shubina, Head of the Department of Mass Events and Volunteer Development of the Committee for Youth Policy and Cooperation with Public Organizations.

"*St. Petersburg unites active young people from different countries who share the values of equality and mutual respect of cultures, as well as aim to form practical joint solutions and new challenges.*" - Vice-Governor of St. Petersburg Konstantin Nikolayevich Zvonik.



The Festival of African Cultures carried on the official program, introducing the public to applied arts and traditional music. The visitors had the opportunity to see the "Dreams of Africa" exhibition, which brought together the creations of artists from various nations who were influenced by the continent's culture and environment. With assistance from the House of Africa "North-West" and the Committee for External Relations of St. Petersburg, the Museum of Contemporary Art "Artmuse" organized the exhibition. In December 2024, St. Petersburg State University inked a preliminary agreement with Termex Corporation LLC and the Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania in the Russian Federation to train experts for the growth of economic cooperation between the two nations.



African tunes were featured on the concert program, along with folk and popular music sung by performers from Russia, Madagascar, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The audience heard the song "Ubuntu," which is dedicated to Russian-African unity, in both Malagasy and Russian, and learned how the Hausa phrase "Oi, kalina blossoms" and the song of friends from the cartoon "Bremen Musicians" sound in Swahili.

Since its 2023 starting point at the Polytechnic University, the "Africa in St. Petersburg" festival has grown to be a significant cross-cultural exchange. Such programs foster global communication and create new avenues for collaborative success in the fields of education, the arts, and society.